

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

JANE DOE, ESQ.,

Plaintiff,

v.

THE LEGAL AID SOCIETY

Defendant.

25-CV-2409 (RA)

ORDER

RONNIE ABRAMS, United States District Judge:

On March 24, 2025, Plaintiff commenced this action and simultaneously filed a motion to proceed anonymously. ECF No. 4. In determining whether a Plaintiff may proceed anonymously, “the plaintiff’s interest in anonymity must be balanced against both the public interest in disclosure and any prejudice to the defendant.” *Sealed Plaintiff v. Sealed Defendant*, 537 F.3d 185, 189 (2d Cir. 2008). A court should consider factors including whether the litigation involves matters that are “highly sensitive and of a personal nature,” “whether identification poses a risk of retaliatory physical or mental harm,” whether the defendant is prejudiced, whether any such prejudice “differs at any particular stage of the litigation,” whether any such prejudice “can be mitigated by the district court,” and the public interest. *Id.* at 190 (internal quotations and citations omitted).


Plaintiff has made a preliminary showing sufficient to permit the filing of the complaint and the issuance of a summons. The nature of Plaintiff’s sexual harassment allegations is highly personal. Given that the Legal Aid Society is a major organization, revelation of Plaintiff’s identity may also lead to significant, potentially harmful public attention. Plaintiff filed the motion *ex parte*, however, and Defendant has a right to be heard. Moreover, the Court must take the interests of the public into account, and “the balance between a party’s need for anonymity and the interests weighing in favor of open judicial proceedings may change as the litigation progresses.” *Does I thru XXIII v. Advanced Textile Corp.*, 214 F.3d 1058, 1069 (9th Cir. 2000).

Accordingly, the motion to file the complaint anonymously is granted. The Court will permit Plaintiff to proceed under a pseudonym temporarily, pending service of the complaint. Plaintiff shall file a renewed—public—motion to continue to proceed anonymously within 30 days of service of the complaint. In the absence of a timely filed motion, the Court will order that Plaintiff's name be disclosed.

The Clerk of Court is respectfully directed to issue a summons upon Plaintiff's request.

SO ORDERED.

Dated: March 27, 2025
New York, New York



Hon. Ronnie Abrams
United States District Judge